

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MEXICO 10032 292049Z

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FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5006

INFO AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO PRIORITY

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AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO

C O N F I D E N T I A L MEXICO 10032

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR MX CI

SUBJ: FONSEC RABASA "EXPLAINS BREAK WITH CHILE"

REF: MEXICO 9997 (NOTAL)

1. FOLLOWING RABASA'S MEETING WITH PRESIDENT ECHE-
VERRIA ON NOV 27, HE HELD A PRESS CONFERENCE WHICH
WAS ALMOST WHOLLY DEVOTED TO THE SUBJECT OF CHILE.
EARLY IN HIS PREPARED STATEMENT, RABASA NOTED THAT OUT-
SIDERS FREQUENTLY DO NOT UNDERSTAND THE
REASONS FOR DECISIONS TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT. SOME-
TIMES, HE SAID, "THESE REASONS CAN BE REVEALED, AT
OTHER TIMES THE EXPLANATION MUST BE POSTPONED, AND AT
STILL OTHERS ON FOREIGN RELATIONS THE REASONS ARE
NEVER STATED." RABASA COONTINUED WITH AN EXPOSITION OF
GOM-GOS RELATIONS SINCE THE FALL OF ALLENDE. ALL GOM
DECISIONS, HE SAID, AT LEAST IN FOREIGN POLICY, ARE THE
"PRODUCT OF A MINUTE DETAILED STUDY BY FONSEC TECHNICIANS,
BY MY ADVISERS AND OBVIOUSLY ALSO BY THE PRESIDENT OF
THE DSL478)*." HE THEN DISCUSSED THE ESTRADA DOCTRINE
POINTING OUT THAT THERE ARE "GRADATIONSZ IN APPLICATION
OF THE DOCTRINE AND THAT THERE IS NO TIME LIMIT FOR ITS
APPLICATION.

CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 MEXICO 10032 292049Z

2. RABASA SAID MEXICO FELT IT NECESSARY TO KEEP ITS

EMBASSY IN SANTIAGO OPEN TO RECEIVE ASYLEES FOLLOWING THE CHILEAN COUP AND HAS RECEIVED BETWEEN 600-700 ASYLEES FROM CHILE. IT WAS ALSO NECESSARY TO LOOK AFTER MEXICAN CITIZENS REMAINING IN CHILE. RABASA THEN ASSERTED THAT THE DECISION TO BREAK RELATIONS WAS MADE ON NOV 26, BUT HE INSISTED IT WAS NOT AN UNREFLECTING ACTION WITHOUT SENSE OR CONSIDERATION, BUT RATHER ONE RESULTING FROM MONTHS OF OBSERVATION OF THE CHILEAN SITUATION BY HIMSELF, HIS ADVISERS AND THE PRESIDENT. GOM-GOC RELATIONS HAD PRACTICALLY CEASED TO EXIST, RABASA STATED, AND REITERATED THAT THE BREAK IN RELATIONS WAS NOT AN UNREFLECTING, IMMATURE ACT TAKEN IN A LIGHT OR EMOTIONAL FASHION BUT RATHER THE FRUIT OF CAREFUL OBSERVATION OF BILATERAL RELATIONS, OF THE ACTIONS OF CHILE IN INTERNATIONAL FORUMS, OF A CONSTANT REVIEW OF HISTORICAL ANTECEDENTS, OF A CONTEMPLATION OF POLITICAL POSITIONS, AND OF EVENTS IN CHILE AS THESE RELATED TO MEXICO OR IN THE INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT. THE BILATERAL RELATIONS "HAVING DIED A NATURAL DEATH", THE GOM ARRIVED AT THE CONSLUSION THAT THE RELATIONSHIP SHOULD BE "CONCLUDED".

3. A LOCAL JOURNALIST ASKED RABASA ABOUT APPARENT AGREEMENT FOLLOWING RABASA'S TRIP TO SANTIAGO IN MAY TO EXCHANGE AMBASSADORS SINCE REPRESENTATION AT THAT TIME WAS, IN EACH CASE, AT THE CHARGE LEVEL. RABASA'S REPLY WAS SOMEWHAT DISJOINTED AND HIGHLY DEFENSIVE. HE DISCUSSED THE DIFFICULTIES OF ASYLEES, THE FAILURE OF HIS EFFORTS ON BEHALD OF CHILEAN EX-FONMIN ALMEYDA, AND THE ALLEGED AGREEMENT OF SALE OF FERTILIZERS BY MEXICO TO CHILE. RABASA SAID HE HAD BEFORE HIM A STENOGRAPHIC TRANSCRIPT, WHICH WAS ALSO ON TAPE IN CHILE, OF HIS STATEMENTS SHORTLY BEFORE LEAVING CHILE IN MAY. HE HAD SAID THAT, IF THE FERTILIZER EXISTED IN THE QUANTITY AND QUALITY REQUIRED, IT WOULD BE DELIVERED. "WE DID NOT HAVE IT AND THUS WE COULD NOT MAKE THE DELIVERIES." THE GOM, HE SAID, DID CONSIDER THE POSSIBILITY OF RAISING DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATION TO THE AMBASSADORIAL LEVEL, BUT DECIDED AGAINST IT.

4. AP REP ASKED RABASA ABOUT A STATEMENT BY PAN LEADER
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 MEXICO 10032 292049Z

TO THE EFFECT THAT THE SUDDEN GOM DECISION TO BREAK RELATIONS REFLECTED EITHER A LACK OF INFORMATION IN THE GOM OR A CAPRICIOUS DECISION. RABASA SAID ONCE MORE THAT THE ACTION WAS NOT UNREFLECTIVE, IMMATURE OR THOUGHTLESS.

"IN NO WAY, AND I SAY THIS EMPHATICALLY AND CATEGORICALLY, WAS IT A THOUGHTLESS CAPRICE BY THE PRESIDENT OR THE FOREIGN SECRETARY OF MEXICO..."

5. WASHINGTON POST REP SIMMONS ASKED WHAT EFFECT THE BREAK MIGHT HAVE IN THE HEMISPHERE. RABASA SAID HE COULD NOT PREDICT THIS BUT NOTED EXTREME DIVERGENCE BETWEEN THE TWO GOVERNMENTS ON LATIN AMERICAN QUESTIONS, FOR EXAMPLE, ON CUBA. HE ESTENDED HIS COMMENTS ON THIS SUBJECT IN RESPONSE TO A PRENSA LATINA QUESTION LAMBASTING THE RIO TREATY.

6. RABASA SAID VENEZUELA HAD AGREED TO REPRESENT GOM INTERESTS IN CHILE. UPI REP ASKED ABOUT THE LAURA ALLENDE CASE. RABASA SAID THE GOM HAD HABITUALLY OFFERED TO RECEIVE MRS. ALLENDE AND HER SON, HAD HAD NO REPLY, BUT THE GOM OFFER REMAINS VALID.

7. A LOCAL REPORTER REFERRED TO ALLEGED CIA INTERVENTION IN CHILE. RABASA: "AS YOU KNOW, MEXICO CONDEMNS EVERY KIND OF INTERVENTION, DIRECT OR INDIRECT... BUT THE PERSONAL CASE OF MR. COLVI (PRESUMABLY COLBY) WAS NOT THE MOTIVE FOR THIS DECISION".

8. IN RESPONSE TO ANOTHER QUERY ON MULTILATERAL FACTORS AFFECTING THE DECISION, RABASA AGAIN REFERRED TO THE "OBSOLETE" RIO TREATY AT SOME LENGTH.

9. A LOCAL REPORTER ASKED RABASA WHETHER U.S. REPRISALS MIGHT RESULT FROM THE GOM DECISION SINCE "THE REGIME OF PINOCHET IS FRUIT OF AMERICAN INTERVENTION." RABASA: "I DON'T THINK THIS WILL HAPPEN BECAUSE THIS IS A MATTER STRICTLY BETWEEN CHILE AND US, NOT IN RELATIONSHIP TO THE U.S."

10. ONE REPORTER ASKED WHETHER MEXICO MIGHT TAKE SIMILAR ACTION WITH RESPECT TO OTHER COUNTRIES WHO VOTED AGAINST LIFTING SANCTIONS ON CUBA. RABASA SAID NO, THE CASES WERE DIFFERENT.

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 MEXICO 10032 292049Z

LAR ACTION WITH RESPECT TO OTHER COUNTRIES WHO VOTED AGAINST LIFTING SANCTIONS ON CUBA. RABASA SAID NO, THE CASES WERE DIFFERENT.

1. ASKED WHETHER THE BREAK IN RELATIONS AT THE TIME TWO CHILEAN MINISTERS WERE IN MEXICO WAS COINCIDENTAL, RABASA EMPHASIZED THAT THIS WAS THE CASE.

12. COMMENT: CLEARLY, RABASA WAS CONFRONTED WITH A MOST DIFFICULT TASK IN EXPLAINING NOT ONLY THE BREAK IN RELATIONS WITH CHILE BUT THE SUDDEN DECISION WHICH LED TO IT. NOTHING IN HIS REMARKS GIVES US A CLEAR LEAD AS TO THE REAL AND IMMEDIATE CAUSE FOR THE BREAK ALTHOUGH THE MEXICKN PRESS WILL LIKELY ACCEPT RABASA'S "EXPLANATION". WORD OF MOUTH COMMENTS BY DIPLOMATS AND OTHERS REFLECT

CONTINUING PUZZLEMENT. SOME EMBASSY DIPLOMATIC CONTACTS HAVE EXPRESSED THE VIEW THAT GOM'S SUDDEN ACTION WILL CREATE UNEASE, LACK OF CONFIDENCE AND PERHAPS A FEELING ON THE PART OF OTHER COUNTRIES THAT MEXICO ACTS IRRATIONALLY. MORE THAN ONE OBSERVER HAS COMMENTED ON THE POSSIBLE ROLE PALYED BY MRS. ECHEVERRIA WHO IS WIDELY CONSIDERED TO BE ON EXTREMELY FRIENDLY TERMS WITH CHILEAN EXILES AND CUBANS.

13. EMBASSY WILL POUCH TRANSCRIPT OF PRESS CONFERENCE TO ARA'MEX.
BRANDIN

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Message Attributes

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